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SERMON V.

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THE POWERS OF DARKNESS HAVE THEIR HOUR.

“BUT this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”—LUKE xxii. 53.

IN every great struggle, whatever the character of the cause, or of the combatants, and however decisive is to be the ultimate victory, there is a season of uncertainty and suspense, when success seems to sway now this way and now that, and the party destined to be defeated has his turn of confidence, and the lookers on are in doubt how the day is to be decided. But such seasons are not ordinarily of long duration, though they may be renewed again and again before the final victory is reached. And they have lessons to teach us of vast importance; and uses, toward the great end for which every wise and righteous struggle is attempted, of incalculable value.

It is too obvious to have escaped the notice of discerning minds, even without the aid of revelation, and still more with it, that there is going on, and has been ever since creation, a mighty con-

S E R M O N V I .

THE CROSS A REMEMBRANCER.

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." LUKE xxiii. 42.

Shortly after midnight, passing out at the east gate of the city, and crossing a narrow valley, through which a mountain-torrent flows during the rainy season, you might have entered a garden and found in one place eight men seated on the ground, silent and sad, and proceeding a little further, you might have discovered three men more, locked in slumber, lying upon the cold earth. As you stop to warn them of their danger in thus sleeping on the damp ground that chilly night, you might just hear the voice of a lone sufferer some six rods further on. As you leave the sleepers and go toward the supplicating voice, you hear, in plaintive tones, these words: "O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Going up to him who is praying, you find his soul in agony and his body covered with bloody perspiration. While you behold the sufferer, ready to sink under the load of sorrows with which he is oppressed, you hear the rustling of wings as a heavenly agent flies to his succor, and imparts to him new strength for the mighty conflict.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." What a deep interest they felt in their suffering Lord. As appalling as the sight is, they can not turn away from beholding it. On that cross are suspended all their hopes. They trusted that it had been he who should redeem Israel. Little did they think that their hopes were to be realized by Christ's dying, and not by his remaining alive with his friends. Little did they think that his sufferings and death were infinitely more value to the universe than his life could be—that without the shedding of his blood there could be no remission—that by his death the human family may have eternal life.

"Oh! the sweet wonders of the cross
Where God incarnate loved and died!"

OF WHAT DOES THE CROSS REMIND US ?

1. Of our fallen and hopeless condition without Christ. Why must the Son of God suffer? Because man hath sinned and fallen under the everlasting curse of his Maker. Either he must endure this curse or Christ must be made a curse for him. It was utterly

impossible for the transgressor to repair the violated law. As there had been sin, there must be suffering. The law must be satisfied, either by the eternal sufferings of the sinner himself, or by the infinitely meritorious sufferings of the Son of God in his stead. Gaze upon the cross, O my soul! and be reminded that thy condition, without Christ, is that of the helpless infant cast out into the open field in his blood, without power to help himself, and without any other eye to pity or arm to save.

2. The cross reminds us of the infinite love of God toward mankind. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The cross exhibits love such as the universe never before witnessed.

3. The cross reminds us of the infinite compassion, condescension, and love of Christ. When there was no eye to pity, he pitied.

"This was compassion like a God,
That when the Saviour knew
The price of pardon was his blood,
His pity ne'er withdrew."

As to condescension, Christ "though in the form of God, and though he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "Though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Can we conceive of greater condescension? As for love, how could there be a stronger expression of it than is presented in the cross?

4. The cross reminds us of the infinite demerit of sin. Sin is such an evil that the sinner must die eternally, or God's incarnate Son must die for him. "The wages of sin is death." When tempted to sin, let us hear a voice coming down from the cross, saying: "Oh! do not this abominable thing that I hate."

5. The cross reminds us of the immense value of the soul. When our divine Master inquires. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" he intimates that the soul is of more value than all the world. But of how much more value than the world we could not know without visiting Calvary. There we learn what it cost to purchase re-

demption for it; and estimating its value by the price paid for its redemption, we conclude that the soul is of infinite worth.

6. The cross reminds us of the reality of the atonement. Here we see the JUST ONE suffering for the unjust—tasting death for every man—receiving wounds for our transgressions, and bruises for our iniquities—dying that we need not die.

7. The cross reminds us of our obligations to love and obey Christ. If Christ has done so much for us, can we ever do enough for him? A view of the cross should make us willing to do any thing, to go any where, and to suffer any thing which his cause and glory require.

8. The cross reminds us of our obligations to love one another. If Christ has so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

9. The cross reminds us of our duty to try to draw all men to Christ and to heaven. On Calvary is the only door into heaven from our world. And as often as we behold the cross, we should feel called upon to direct every sinner's eye to this only door of hope.

REMARKS.

1. What a blessed privilege to have a cross in our world. This is the only world, as we have reason to believe, on which a cross has ever been erected. Let us adore the distinguishing love of God! What a dark and dreary world this would be without a cross! How sad, how hopeless!

2. There is no salvation for the sinner except through the cross.

3. It is the privilege of all men to be saved through the cross. "Whosoever will, let him." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out." "As Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth."

4. The cross has attractions strong enough, it would seem, to draw all men, who have any knowledge of it, to it. It is wonderful that any stay away and perish.

5. Sinners who sink to perdition from a Gospel land, will wish to forget that there was ever a cross. Thoughts of it in hell will be very uncomfortable and unwelcome.